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ABSTRACT

The Institute on Environmental Information Programs for Public Libraries which was held at Western Michigan University on May 7-13, 1972, brought together practicing public librarians who had been successfully coping with the service demands made on their institutions by growing concern over environmental problems. As librarians who are dealing with an increasingly serious problem of supplying information to an awakening clientele, the urgencies for this particular kind of information and the provision of services attending it did not conceal the fact that this was another kind of basic public library service that could be dealt with by using established library methods. Public librarians have in the past on many occasions responded to the public's need to know. The examples provided in this Institute of successful environmental information programs already in operation are models for action in other communities. It was made evident that the public library can rise to this challenge. This guide to the field of environmental information programs for public libraries contains these chapters: The public library and environmental information services, The selection of environmental information materials, The organization of environmental information materials, The public library and the environmental information program, and the public library's environmental information program and social responsibility. (Other Institute materials are available as LI 004 470 through 004 472.) (Author/SJ)

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A HANDBOOK ON
ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION PROGRAMS
FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

by

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INTRODUCTION

The Institute on Environmental Information Programs for Public Libraries which was held at Western Michigan University on May 7-13, 1972, brought together practicing public librarians who had been successfully coping with the service demands made on their institutions by growing concern over environmental problems. Even as useful ideas were exchanged, there was a realization that the particular subject content of our concern was changing and shifting as legislation evolved, as awareness of the nation's concern deepened, and as literature and materials accumulated and the potentialities of library service grew.

As librarians who are dealing with an increasingly serious problem of supplying information to an awakening clientele, the urgencies for this particular kind of information and the provision of services attending it did not conceal the fact that this was another kind of basic public library service that could be dealt with by using established library methods. Only the data and the sources and, perhaps, the clientele, might be different. The materials in this new field would consist of a large proportion of non-book materials in the form of pamphlets, government documents, maps, slides, filmstrips, motion pictures, recordings, tapes and videocassettes. The environment is not solely the province of the scientist and the technologist. There are political, economic, ethical, esthetic and humanistic considerations to be weighed as well as scientific ones. Thus, every person

is to some extent an environmentalist. His informed participation in environmental matters is a valuable and needed input. Public librarians have in the past on many occasions responded to the public's need to know. The examples provided in this Institute of successful environmental information programs already in operation are models for action in other communities. It was made evident that the public library can rise to this challenge.

With environmental information developing broadly on a number of fronts—legislative, action, precedent, procedure, literature—that specialist in materials and services, the public librarian, must be constantly aware of resources and developments. These form the essential base from which a creditable, useful collection is built which, in turn, serves as the link between the needs of the public and the library staff's capabilities.

One of the many outcomes of the Institute and its formal and informal programs is this modest guide to the field of environmental information programs for public libraries. All of the Institute participants have made their contributions in one way or another to this text. They will no doubt recognize some of their many ideas which were so numerous that it is impossible to acknowledge them individually.

Martin Cohen
Kalamazoo, Michigan
July 1973

CHAPTER I

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION SERVICES

The American public library today has another challenge and opportunity facing it in the form of a nation's concern about the quality of the environment. It is a situation in which the public's overwhelming need to know can be met by an alert professionalism and an adherence to the highest service ideals inherent in our calling. The very existence of the public library is an institutionalized expression of a basic democratic premise: that the adult American citizen will, when enough information is made available to him, make a mature reasoned judgment about any situation. The collectivity of all judgments is public opinion which is frequently translated by the governmental process into public policy.

The condition of our environment by its very pervasiveness is one that ultimately affects every person. Unlike many other issues that librarians have been concerned with, this one transcends racial, political and socio-economic boundaries and is inextricably bound up with the very physical existence of the population. In addition, vigorous citizen action has compelled government to pay heed and take action in one environmental area after another. In turn the government on all levels has turned to the citizen and has encouraged him to express his concerns and initiate actions, providing him with guidelines, assistance and encouragement.

This call for citizen involvement is genuinely sought for by the government through many of its agencies. It must be met with a

competent response by those with convictions about the quality of life. The effectiveness of anyone undertaking environmentally-related action is in direct proportion to the case that can be made for his side. And the basis of any good case is the quality of information available. Obviously, the kind of role that librarians have been used to playing can be most helpful here. That role is that of the selector, acquirer, organizer and interpreter of materials.

With environmental information, however, the scope of the field is not so handily defined as with other subject areas. The subject is relatively new, although much material from traditional approaches in conservation, public health, sanitation and other disciplines is still very useful. New legislation, new cases, new actions, new findings and new publications are all culminating in a rapidly growing body of materials available for the environmental collection in public libraries.

The encompassing nature of the subject can be seen in the definition of the word itself:

environment: the total of the circumstances surrounding an organism or a group of organisms, specifically; the combination of external or extrinsic physical conditions that affect and influence the growth and development of organisms. (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language)

The scientific study of the mutual relations among organisms and between them and their environment is "ecology." Although the word "oecology," coined by Ernst Haeckel, was used in print as far back as 1869, and the science of ecology is about a century old, the present widespread public interest in the science is relatively new.

The accelerated effect of man's alteration of the environment is a matter of increasing awareness to a wider segment of the public. Two major pivotal events in this consciousness-raising were the publication

of Rachel Carson's book, The Silent Spring, in 1962, and the national observance of Earth Day in 1970. This has since been followed by the 1972 United Nations Conference on the "Human Environment in Stockholm". Subsequently there has been a growing involvement on the part of many interest groups in taking a more activist role in matters concerning the environment.

The kinds of information that will fit the needs of this new awareness may be roughly divided into several major categories:

a) that dealing with the environment on a descriptive factual basis;
b) that which concerns the areas of legislation and action in matters environmental; and c) that dealing with the problems of values. The job, then, of the public librarian, is to select, acquire and organize these pertinent materials and make them available.

A basic question to be decided early about a public library environmental information program is whether to have it separate from or integrated into the existing service pattern. Any specialized collection or service which deviates from regular library practice must be administratively justifiable. The leaders currently in public library environmental information programs are those who, by special circumstances, are heading not only special collections, but providing outreach services. Categorized funding with the particular obligations placed on that service may warrant this amount of specialization.

The subject coverage of ecology is spread over many different subjects and into many subject classifications. The various areas which comprise the bases for a public environmental information program are interdisciplinary. In a large library the scattering of materials over various departments is a source of patron frustration and a

hindrance in providing efficient service. Library classification systems—Dewey or Library of Congress—are not amenable to the convenient placing of these materials into one or a few places. There are 22 classes in the L.C. system alone on "environment," with the possibility of materials being placed in all of these. The "very interconnectedness of things," in the words of Barry Commoner, seem to call for an integrated collection. On the other hand, a separate service will have to answer questions about duplication of materials, specialized staff and space requirements. Only libraries which can justify such a special service on the basis of public need and use will find support for a separate collection.

It will take a persuasive librarian to convince administrators and the dispensers of funds of the need for a new and separate service. A more than superficial familiarity with program budgeting and the implications of accountability is necessary to present the best kind of convincing case. Environmental information, education, and action have been established as non-partisan primary concerns of our national government. This cause is apparently going to be more than a transient American enthusiasm that will go out of style in a few years. However, the uncertainties of outside funding from state and national sources must be fully taken into consideration in realistically appraising the possibilities of separate environmental information programs in public libraries.

The other alternative is to follow the usual pattern in providing library services. That is to operate within the existing structure of staff, services and programs. Given the undeniable statistical evidence that the preponderant majority (about 80%) of American public libraries

serve small to medium sized populations (25,000 to 100,000), some arrangement for integrating the environmental program into the total library program would seem to be the most realistic approach in most cases.

The large metropolitan library or system, on the other hand, may be able to establish a separate environmental information program on the basis of need. The rapidly increasing urgency of the environmental situation in some populous areas is provoking strong action from the Environmental Protection Agency. This high-priority concern is one which needs to be supported with as much of the best kind of information obtainable. The large public library with its resources of staff, space and budget could well provide the necessary materials and services as a responsive social institution.

CHAPTER II

THE SELECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION MATERIALS

An environmentally related information program in a public library can best be initiated by compiling a statement of objectives and purposes. There should be a clear relationship between the stated services to be offered and the materials in the collection. It is obvious that this should be compatible with the overall purpose of the library.

Gauging the potential public for such a relatively new subject of major concern, the environment, may be difficult at first. In terms of potential users one must realistically expect only a certain percentage of the population to make use of materials and services. The precedents and experience in this new field of library service are lacking or insufficient to provide enough firm data. The success of an environmental program is dependent on more than just the collection. Public libraries should be more than just passive depositories waiting for patrons. For the fullest utilization of these materials dedicated staff members are indispensable. They provide the catalyst between user--actual and potential--and materials. In reality, this aspect of public library service is the most important component of any successful program. It involves an active consistent schedule of publicity, promotion, liaison, contacts, involvement and engagement with patrons, organizations, government officials, colleagues and professionals in all fields. In other words, it encompasses all those aspects of library service both within and outside the walls of the

institution.

The clientele for such materials and services can and should include the whole community within the library's service area of responsibility. One of the largest user groups will be the student body. Ecology is now an accepted curriculum item in most schools and the library may expect demands for materials and services from elementary school pupils to college students. Groups and organizations which have been regular library users will also be focusing on the environment in their study and discussion sessions. The concerned individual who seeks to better inform himself will also need materials. Government officials and other professionals should be able to find useful help in the public library. All too often the public library is not thought of as a vital information center by the engineer, the businessman, the lawyer or the technician. A major task of the librarian is to demonstrate to and convince these potential patrons that their information needs may be met at the library.

The whole public may thus be seen as potential users of the environmental information services of the library. At first this should mean a generalized approach to collection building. The wide range of needs of the general public denotes a variety of styles, reading levels and approaches. Further close observation of user patterns and better acquaintance with the environmentally-minded community should allow a more precise shaping of the selection policy to better satisfy actual patron needs. Some public libraries have aimed for or responded to the need for more sophisticated or more technical materials for their particular users.

With a policy guideline and some idea of the target audience,

selection may proceed on a more rational basis. Although the collection needs of many libraries may be satisfied by the use of conventional bibliographical sources, specialized indexes and services may also have to be utilized. These are useful as the environmental collection and services broaden. They do offer a depth of specialization and access to sources of information not touched by the usual tools of the selector.

Current monographic material is well covered by the familiar selection aids. These include Publishers Weekly, American Book Publishing Record (monthly) and the American Book Publishing Record BPR Annual Cumulative. Monitoring these insure a good coverage. The "Weekly Record" of Publishers Weekly is conveniently rearranged each month into the American Book Publishing Record by Dewey subject category. This permits an easier focusing on the subject areas of concern. The BPR Annual Cumulative volume compiles the whole year's output of American publishing into one volume, subject classified and furnished with subject, author and title index. The Cumulative Book Index, in the usual Wilson Company format of monthly issues, quarterly and annual cumulations, has a single dictionary arrangement, facilitating a subject approach. The Library Journal maintains a consistently useful library orientation in the 6,000+ books it reviews yearly. Its broad subject arrangement for non-fiction leads one quickly to pertinent materials. For the past few years Library Journal has provided an annual "Environment Update" article by George Siehl of the Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Environmental Policy Division ("Our World—and Welcome to It!" v. 95: 1443-7, April 15, 1970; "Literature Subsequent to the Environmental Nova," v. 96:

2266-70, July 1971; "Environmental Update," v. 97: 3546-51, November 1, 1972). This is an excellent summary of environmental news which also lists and annotates the significant literature of the year.

As the issues regarding the environment have engaged the attention of the public, government has intervened on all levels. This has taken the form of legislation, policy and position statements, studies, court actions and other activities. Official documents must therefore form a basic part of any environmental collection. Document indexes and the service of providing information about documents are an important aspect of the library's information program.

The federal government is the most prolific source of official documents, with its activities usually well documented. It is also basically committed to a full program of information and disclosure to the public. Any difficulty in getting information from the government is usually a result of not being able to utilize sources properly. Admittedly, finding out about government publications requires learning a new approach to materials selection and acquisition, but, once learned, the output of the country's largest source of printed materials is readily accessible.

The Government Printing Office uses in its indexes an agency approach to classification. This means that publications are listed only secondarily by subject. The issuing agency is of the most importance in looking up material. Unfortunately, the subjects of our concern, ecology and the environment, are the responsibility of numerous federal agencies. The various administrative reorganizations, policy changes, and personnel shifts make some agency functions temporary. The only certain guide to the complexities of Washington government

is the latest edition of the official United States Government Organization Manual. Here are described the structural details of most governmental agencies, with their activities, personnel, responsibility and statutory authority. The index of the 1971/72 edition has 61 entries under "Environment." Appendix B of this publication lists the major governmental agencies with concerns in this area.

The most comprehensive guide to official documents is the Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications. Its subject index refers to the publications and its bibliographical description under the issuing agency. Scores of entries may be found under the subject headings of "conservation," "ecology," "environment," "environmental," "pollution," "waste," "waste disposal," and many others. The Monthly Catalog lists the publications of the Government Printing Office. There is also a vast amount of non-G.P.O. material issued which must be obtained directly from the issuing agencies. The Superintendent of Documents has a free price list, "Ecology," (PL 88) containing a large number of references to pertinent publications from government sources. Another free index is the bi-weekly Selected U.S. Government Publications, obtainable from the Superintendent of Documents. This is selective and contains the more popular publications in many fields. The regular monthly column of Fred J. O'Hara in Wilson Library Bulletin, "Selected Government Publications," occasionally features environmental materials.

State documents will be of particular interest on the local level. Most states now have a documents checklist. Peter Hernon's article in the Library Journal of April 15, 1972 (pp. 1393-8), listed the available state documents checklists. The Library of Congress' Monthly

Checklist of State Publications combines listings of state publications from all over. However, this is not an inclusive listing, for it depends on a voluntary submission of materials to the Library of Congress. Despite this, it does provide a fairly good method of rapidly scanning the output of some of the more important state documents.

No individual, organization, business or industry today remains unaffected by the state of the environment. Our attitudes and behavior towards the surrounding are necessarily becoming more channelled, restricted and controlled. There is consequently an increasing need for more information. Every public library should have copies of the major environmental statutes on all governmental levels. Compilations of these laws are indispensable reference sources for environmental activists, study groups, businessmen and students. The Environmental Protection Agency issues its own manual of the body of laws under which it operates (Current Laws: Statutes and Executive Orders. Environmental Protection Agency, Government Printing Office). One of the most comprehensive services for legislation and related actions is the Environment Reporter (Bureau of National Affairs, Washington, D.C.). This is a weekly loose leaf service emphasizing environmental law. It reviews, week by week, "pollution control and related environmental management problems." It provides the text of Federal laws and regulations, state laws, court decisions, news of current developments and selected monographs in the field. The library itself may find valuable the text and interpretation of the Environmental Education Act, especially in connection with its information program. State and local environmental regulations and ordinances should also be systematically collected.

Local governments have an important environmental impact on their citizens. The closeness of the issue to the public on this level make it vital that the library's public have access to such information. The existing local history collection in the library provides a basis for studying changes in land use, for instance. The amount of useful materials here can be a distinct asset for those concerned with the local environment.

Acquisition of materials from county, city, township and village agencies requires more ingenuity and personal involvement on the part of the librarian. There are usually no checklists of bibliographic listings of local publications below the state level. Lacking the usual selection aids, the librarian himself has to personally visit the local offices and agencies to request materials. In the course of this personal acquisition process, the librarian can build contacts and establish relationships with significant members of the community involved with the environment. The possibility of enlisting such official talent as resource persons is not to be ignored.

Much use can be made of the existing collection of materials through use of appropriate indexes. With the environment now a standard article item for most magazine editors, the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature will bring to light much material. Other Wilson Company indexes such as the Applied Science and Technology Index, the Biological and Agricultural Index and the Business Periodicals Index extend the usefulness of existing periodical holdings.

Material available for subject areas like the environment should reflect the rapid changes that are taking place. "Vertical file material," as pamphlets, booklets, clippings and similar formats are called,

may be the only way to keep abreast of actual happenings. For this purpose Wilson's Vertical File Service and the Public Affairs Information Service are indispensable. They pinpoint and emphasize non-book printed materials.

Specialized information sources are now available to meet the information needs of a concerned country. These generally review or abstract the political, legal, scientific and technical literature of the field and provide the researcher with enough information for him to determine the advisability of following up references. Some of the titles of these services are Pollution Abstracts, Environmental Index, Environmental Information Access, Environment Reporter, Environmental Information Sources and Environmental Quality.

Periodicals with prime emphasis on ecological-environmental matters must be included. Aids such as Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory and Bill Katz' Magazines for Libraries list the standard titles already in the field under the appropriate subject headings. Bill Katz' regular Library Journal column, "Magazines," provides coverage for the new periodical titles as they appear.

Other sources of information about additional materials may be obtained in several ways. A tried and true method is that of following up citations. Checking on bibliographical references made in books or journal articles is a good way of covering the literature sources. Any alert convention-goer can visit exhibits, talk to publisher's representatives and get on mailing lists. The groups and organizations interested in environmental information whom you serve are sometimes affiliated with national associations which have pub-

lishing programs. The local chapters should be helpful to the library in acquiring materials. Acquisition lists obtained from other environmental librarians on an exchange basis should assist in maintaining a good surveillance of the field.

The quest for materials that will fulfill the objectives of the public library's environmental information program will naturally include some non-print and non-book items. The subject of the environment is one that lends itself to graphic representation. As is the case with many newly expanding fields of interest, many producers are ready to supply demands for materials. The cost of these materials and the relative unfamiliarity of some librarians with non-book materials make it all the more imperative that reliable selection tools be employed. The regular selection aids have responded to these needs and are focusing attention on this area. Environmentally related materials are now listed usually under their own headings. In considering the large number of choices in this field ultimate usage must be kept in mind. The standard classroom film or packet of audio-visual materials may not be suitable for the public library. Two periodicals which emphasize this point are the American Library Association's Booklist and the Bowker Company's Previews: News and Reviews of Non-Print Media. The coverage here includes not only films but tapes, recordings, slides, pictures and other materials. A systematic coverage of the library press will bring to your attention occasional, if irregular, listings of materials as well as publication notices of bibliographies or checklists. An attempt at completeness in listing of available materials is the Index to Ecology (Multimedia) of the National Center for Educational Media (Los Angeles, 1st edition, 1971).

Maps are particularly useful in the study of the environment. The vast map publishing program of the United States offers a wide variety to the selector. The specific price list, "Maps" (PL 53), is obtainable free from the U. S. Superintendent of Documents and is a good introduction to these resources. A coverage of newer and more recent maps and charts can be obtained by systematically checking the issues of the Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications. The National Atlas of the United States, an official government publication, provides a wealth of information in one handy format. Rand McNally's new atlas, Earth and Man, emphasizes ecology in pictorially striking ways.

Public interest in the environment probably increases as the problems become more localized. Therefore, it is not enough to look for sources of graphic materials on a national scale. State, county and local agencies produce and utilize maps and charts of all kinds which pertain to the environment. They may also be an excellent source of films, slides or pictures. The same may also be said of the private and the non-profit non-governmental sectors. The involvement of business, industry, foundations and associations in environmental concerns has led to the production of numerous kinds of useful information in many formats. Since much of this occurs outside of the regular bibliographical channels that libraries use, special efforts and vigilance is necessary to monitor these potentially useful sources.

CHAPTER III

THE ORGANIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION MATERIALS

The nature and range of environmental materials pose special problems in organizing the collection. Ecology is an interdisciplinary field. It is as much concerned with humanistic values and social science factors as with science and technology. The knowledge classification systems available to librarians do not accomodate this newcomer easily.

Separate environmental information collections and services will probably not be feasible for most public libraries. Those few libraries which have established such operations are more in the nature of special libraries. Even the largest of these, however, do not see themselves as completely separately functioning entities, but rather as a specialized service within the total library operation, using the whole collection, facilities and staff to accomplish the program's objectives.

The classification of monographic material into an integrated collection will result in a scattering of environmental literature. Patron convenience and service in an integrated collection must be weighed against the librarian's concept of orderliness and efficiency. This is an old dilemma of librarians which must be resolved as the needs and interests of the public change. Practically speaking, a decision must be taken whether the overall benefits to the public of a separately marked and shelved ecological collection will outweigh the practical administrative problems. Difficult decisions regarding space, budget and staff face any director contemplating organizing

this separate service.

The subject spread of the "environment" is too broad to permit tidy solutions in organizing materials. There are dozens of classes in Subject Headings Used in the Dictionary Catalogs of the Library of Congress and in the 18th edition of Dewey. There exists the possibility of library materials in all of these as well as under additional subject headings which these older listings do not include.

Much environmental material is timely, narrowly subject-focused and specific, originating from sources often different from the usual library acquisition sources. The format and character of these lend themselves to inclusion in the library's vertical file system.

Vertical file material usually emphasizes a narrow and specific area. Author and title approaches to locating material are not used, nor is random browsing an efficient method of information-location. This makes the assignment of subject headings very important as it is the only access method. The problem of environmental materials with more than one subject emphasis may be solved by generous use of "see" and "see also" references or the duplication of materials under other subject headings.

The very timeliness of vertical file materials has its drawbacks. All too frequently recent pamphlet material, for example, is published and available before subject headings are established in formal sources. The public may well be asking for information on a newly opened aspect of ecology before it has been indexed, classified or assigned a subject heading.

Unfortunately, the subject heading guides that have been standard tools for librarians are too out-dated for this field. In addition,

listings such as Sears, Dewey and the Library of Congress were designed for books and tend to be too general for much vertical file use. They also lag behind actual day-by-day needs in rapidly evolving subject areas.

Librarians have for a long time made use of magazine and other indexes for subject headings in new areas. That reliable stand-by, Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, is always responsive in its subject headings to new developments. Indexes such as Vertical File Service, Public Affairs Information Service, Applied Science and Technology Index, the Business Periodicals Index and others provide further subject heading sources. Reviewing and abstracting services such as those mentioned in Chapter II furnish subject headings or descriptors in quite specific and precise categories. At times even these aids will fail to provide guidance and the librarian will be forced to draw on his own knowledge of the subject to classify materials. Presumably his insight into how the public will ask for this information will also assist.

The purpose of any subject heading is to facilitate the location and retrieval of information. A knowledge of the field and how the public approaches information-finding in it is indispensable.

Once subject headings have been assigned for vertical file material, they may be applied directly on the item or on labels and filed in their respective folders or envelopes. An exact detailed description of the physical handling of vertical file materials may be found in The Vertical File and Its Satellites: A Handbook of Acquisition, Processing and Organization by Shirley Miller (Libraries Unlimited, Inc., Littleton, Colo., 1971).

Subject headings should be the responsibility of an individual staff member. An authority file of subject headings (preferably on cards) should be established and kept current as the headings are changed or added to.

The usefulness of vertical file material may be extended by a generous use of "see" and "see also" references on the vertical file folders. Cards drawing attention to vertical file material may be used in the public catalog as well. If the environmental material is to be incorporated into the library's main vertical file, a special listing of these headings should be readily available and on hand for consultation. It is possible to bridge the difference in subject heading approaches by providing the public with specific guidance. A simple sheet printed on both sides, "How To Find Material On Man's Environment In the Buffalo And Erie County Public Library," is such a listing. It includes all of the 72 subject headings in the card catalog "dealing with environmental issues" and the 86 subject headings under which "magazine articles on the environment can be located in the periodical indexes." Other libraries have included vertical file subject headings on their lists. This kind of coverage will insure that the searches for materials will be complete despite the differences in formats and treatments.

A mainstay of the environmental collection is the government document. Libraries which are members of the federal depository system generally use the Superintendent of Documents classification. This is not a subject, but an agency, approach. The source of issue and the type of publication--annual report, circular, bulletin, etc.--determines the classification and, consequently, the shelving. Thus,

ecological reports may or may not be together under this arrangement. The depository library librarian at times does remove from the document collection those items of enough value to warrant individual cataloging, classification and shelving within the main collection or in the vertical file. Library of Congress cards are available for this purpose. An alternative is to obtain duplicate copies of these inexpensive materials for these places.

The basic purpose of organization of a public library collection is to enhance accessibility. This means accessibility for the public, either with or without the help of a librarian. Environmental information is at this point in time in a developing and growing stage. The precedents and examples of the organization of these collections in public libraries are not yet so numerous that one can follow specific guidelines established and tested by experience. However, the elements of good basic library practice combined with thoughtful statements of the purposes and objectives of the environmental information collection will go a long way toward providing the basis for an essential and valuable community service.

CHAPTER IV

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION PROGRAM

There is a need to go beyond the selection, acquisition and organization of environmental materials and into an active program of service. While there will always be a certain small number of patrons who will use materials no matter how they are displayed, the value of the collection to the community will be greatly enhanced by a policy of vigorous promotion.

As in the case of so many other subjects of community interest, the public library remains the best single source of all kinds of information. Librarians by virtue of their training and their professional practices are still the best systematic organizers of knowledge. For the kinds of questions that are being asked about the environment the library is the institution with the greatest potential. This is particularly so in this field where there are so many conflicting issues and interests and where there is a need for the community to have access to a variety of sources. Here the librarian can best fulfill his role as an intermediary between patron and collection.

Positive action needs to be taken to alert the community of the existence of materials and services. A consistent program of publicity and promotion must be undertaken. This will always be a difficult problem, what with the overwhelming competition for the public's attention from other sources, the generally low profile of the American public library and the concept of the library as a last-resort place of reference or information-finding. Only the "image" that the public has of

the library is at fault. Functionally the library has a breadth and depth of material that offers much more than the usual superficial coverage given the environment in the media. This is the story that must be presented to the public through radio, television and newspaper publicity.

The news editors of the media are usually strongly community-minded and concerned with the public interest. There is generally a writer, editor or staffer who has responsibility for environmental matters. This is the key person with whom it is necessary to deal with on good personal terms. The librarian can be of help to him in his work with the library's resources. He should be receptive to the stories, announcements, lists and articles that emanate from the environmental information program. In the course of generating library publicity the library is also engaged in public relations. All contacts, especially with media representatives, should be regarded as opportunities to enhance the library's dynamic role.

It is very necessary for the librarian to understand the requirements of the media regarding formats, deadlines, acceptability and taboos. This does not prevent one from suggesting ideas for coverage in the way of booklists, articles, abstracts and features. A thorough perusal of the library press with special attention to what is being done in library public relations will generate enough ideas for the media.

All of this kind of approach is equally applicable to radio and television. A thorough understanding of a station's particular ground rules will provide a basis from which to plan a systematic program of spot announcements, identification slides, news items and features.

Books and authors seem now to be a staple of many popular television and radio programs. There is no reason why local public library television and radio programming should not take advantage of this trend to publicize its collection. The potential audience whose estimate can be furnished by station personnel is well worth the efforts put into such endeavors. Both radio and television stations have different audiences at different times of their broadcast day. Messages should be tailored in content, style and language to focus upon specific audiences.

While most announcements and promotional spots will probably be aired by station personnel, the librarian himself should be prepared to be a performer. In this age one must be at ease before a radio microphone or television camera. These powerful tools for reaching a wider public should be a natural part of a librarian's stock-in-trade. Again, here the station's program director will be of the most assistance to the librarian going on the air. Besides the knowledge and expertise that is to be expected from a library representative, the best qualifications that insure an interested audience are sincerity and enthusiasm. The devotion that will have gone into the establishment of an environmental information program in a library should come over unmistakably to the listening and viewing audience.

Radio and television must be considered as partners and not as rivals in our mission to serve the public in environmental affairs. Repeated polls have shown that there is a growing reliance on and belief in the electronic media. Not to take advantage of such circumstances would be extremely short-sighted for public libraries. There

are almost infinite possibilities for radio and television programs latent in the materials in the library's collection. It is up to the librarian as a part of the environmental information program to see that they are aired and brought to the attention of a wider audience. Many non-print audio visual materials that the library has on this subject--maps, charts, films, slides and pictures--can be used to make television programs visually interesting.

Radio and television stations are obliged by the Federal Communications Commission to provide public service time to libraries and other similar institutions. Station managers are more than willing to cooperate with imaginative librarians to fulfill this part of their broadcasting responsibilities.

There are other methods of bringing to the public's attention the library's environmental information program than through the media. Displays and exhibits inside and outside of the library can be useful, especially if done in cooperation with some environmental group.

The resources of the public library--both in materials and staff--put it in an advantageous position regarding information. No other profession or institution is as well equipped as librarians or libraries to monitor, select and organize the literature of any subject. Thus, we are well situated to point out and emphasize useful materials, even to the professionals and practitioners. The continuing proliferation of reviewing and abstracting services provide a key to a wealth of environmental materials. From this the librarian can extract that which is important to his community. A prerequisite for the successful accomplishment of this task is a knowledge of the community--its wants and needs--and of specific environmental problems and areas of concern.

With this kind of background the pertinent materials can then be located and put to local use. This may take the form of a locally produced bibliography or abstract bulletin. For example, the general abstract bulletin, "For Better Communities Wherever They Are and Better Informed People Who Care," which gives abstracts of periodical articles pertinent to the library's local situation has been enthusiastically received by the patrons of the Prince George's County Memorial Library, Maryland. This kind of service also has been used successfully by a number of public libraries specifically in the environmental area.

The best results with an active program can be obtained by working with organized groups that have a demonstrated interest in the environment. Librarians should be acquainted with the roster of community organizations and should establish a working relationship with their officers. Another publication of this Institute, Beatrice Sichel's Guide to Private Citizen Action Environmental Groups, provides a guide to some of these organizations which may have local chapters. A careful screening of club and organization activity as reported in the media will furnish further clues to environmentally oriented groups. In addition, the Chamber of Commerce and professional and trade groups all should be regarded as having some concern about the environment and as being potential users of the library's materials and services.

When citizens are engaged enough to take some action, the library should provide them with information concerning the correct channels and procedures. Typical of many of these guides are two government publications: Community Action for Environmental Quality by the Citizens Advisory Committee on Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency's Don't Leave It All To The Experts.

A good practical way to get involved in the community's ecological problems is to inventory the local situation. The inquiries and research necessary will not only result in usable information and materials, but will also put the librarian in touch with important involved individuals. One feasible project could be a pictorial environmental inventory of the library's service area done in cooperation with camera clubs. Such meaningful and useful assignments are welcomed by service-minded organizations. This is the kind of initiatory and imaginative action that the public library can promote advantageously.

The central unpolarized position that public libraries occupy provide a vantage point from which to freely move in any direction in a community. Accepted as a neutral or disinterested factor in most community disputes, the library can use its mediating role to bring factions or opponents together. It can serve to coordinate and focus efforts of diverse environmental groups. The existence of an environmental collection to serve all citizens plus the knowledgeable assistance of a competent staff expedites environmental study, discussion and action. Any of the activities undertaken in the information program will strengthen the library's standing as a significant factor in the community's understanding of the environmental situation.

CHAPTER V

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY'S ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION PROGRAM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

A guide to the public library's environmental information program would be incomplete if it did not consider the aspect of social responsibility. The phrase, "social responsibility," has in the last decade become charged with emotional overtones. It has been invoked repeatedly to justify advocacy by librarians in their professional roles of a number of specific causes. The intensity of belief of some librarians has fostered lively discussion about the library's traditional role of neutrality.

A look at the nature of the problem that the public library's environmental information program is directed at may provide some perspective. The 1970's have brought to the nation's attention some pressing environmental problems. While not every citizen in every part of the United States is equally affected, the state of the environment is now or soon will be a matter of universal concern. The extent of that concern is a matter of individual perception and interpretation.

If environmental problem solving were a pure natural science that could be studied and experimented with in a laboratory, its laws might be as widely accepted as the basic principles of physics. However, the environment is a complicated composition of everything that exists in nature as well as in man's civilization. It is as much a matter of esthetics, politics and economics as it is of chemistry, biology and zoology. It goes

beyond scientific findings and into the realm of values, attitudes and culture. Even the evidence of science is sometimes in dispute.

As our consciousness of the environment grows we discover additional factors that complicate simplistic solutions. Some of these which must be considered are the energy crisis, the international balance of payments, the economic consequences of pollution control and many others. In this democracy solutions are arrived at by the process of compromise. Only absolutist governments can impose perfect--and absolutist--solutions. Compromise--not surrender--implies an understanding of another's position. The basis for this understanding lies in information, the very commodity that libraries are so well equipped to provide.

"Advocacy" is defined as the active support of a cause. In the process of building a library collection, a desirable and practicable goal is the provision of "books and other materials presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times."

(The Library Bill of Rights, paragraph 2) However, at this point where programs and services must necessarily present specific information or conduct certain activities as being of special value, the process of selectivity enters, hopefully guided by the highest standards of professionalism.

An adherence to a policy of "advocacy" might well impair the ability of a library to provide essential information. The public to be served by a library means all patrons, actual and potential. It definitely does not mean only those who agree with your viewpoint or who are "right." The Library Bill of Rights is still the best policy

guide for public libraries in a democracy. A close rereading of all of its provisions will provide a good perspective on "advocacy." An elaboration of this issue is found in Appendix A in Lester Asheim's paper, "The Social Responsibility of the Public Library."

The issues posed by the impending seriousness of our environmental problems are sure to become critical in the near future. Many interests and forces will be involved. Fundamental decisions affecting the health, safety and economic well-being of every citizen will be made. The need for providing as much useful information as possible is crucially important. The public library can be the vital link between available knowledge and the action that comes from an informed citizenry. Some public libraries have already started their environmental information programs and are contributing to the solution of local problems. Their experiences have been summarized and distilled into this handbook in an effort to provide guidance to others in like enterprises.

APPENDIX A

THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

A paper presented to the
Institute on Environmental Information Programs
for Public Libraries
Western Michigan University
May 13, 1972
by
Lester Asheim*

The other speakers in this Institute have dealt directly, specifically and clearly with the subject matter with which the Institute is concerned. They have zeroed in on environmental information and the programs that public libraries can design to disseminate and promote it. They have dealt with specific procedures, channels and materials relevant to information about the environment. They have been -- in an absolute sense -- helpful.

My topic, I am afraid, is much less practically useful. The question it raises is only incidentally a question about environmental information. It is a question about libraries in general: their role; their self-image; and their philosophy, tacit or expressed. My remarks, except for some of the illustrations I use, might be given at almost any gathering of librarians who are serious about the business they are in. I don't think that makes my presence here irrelevant, but it may make the relevance more difficult to discern.

For the question, "What is the social responsibility of the public library?" goes back behind any single specific program to the

*Professor, Graduate Library School, The University of Chicago.

basic "idea of what a library should be," in its overall social context. It is a question to which each of you has already given an answer in a way, simply by choosing to attend this Institute. My task, as I see it, is primarily to explore some of the implications of the answer you have given.

That answer, it seems to me, is that the public library does have a responsibility for making information available which is relevant to the pressing social problems of the citizens of the community in which the library is located, and that "to make available" is an active and not a passive concept. This implies that the librarian has a responsibility for recognizing what these key issues are, and for providing not only wanted information, but needed information, whether that information is pleasant, controversial, or downright distressing. "Without fear or favor" is the cliché that comes to mind.

In his invitation to me to participate in this Institute, Mr. Carroll put a particular stress on the problem of "controversial" content, and suggested that part of my assignment is to explore whether there are justifiable limitations on the public librarian's interpretation of the role he will play in making information available. What, for example, if certain forces in the community oppose dissemination of the data the library administrators think would be desirable to supply? What if -- to be more specific -- a powerful member of the library's board does not like the tone of the ecological materials the librarian feels are essential to a full presentation of the issue? To make it really tough -- what if the library serves a one-industry town in which that industry is a major polluter?

It is easy to give firm and fine-sounding answers to these ques-

tions, as long as they are only rhetorical, but not so easy when they are real. Anyone who has worked in a public library knows that without support it cannot continue to operate. Everyone who has worked in a public library knows that since its support comes from public sources we are, like it or not, in a corner of the political arena, even if not in the center ring. And everyone who has even the slightest sense of political operations knows that there may have to be compromises of one kind or another in order to accomplish what one wants to accomplish, and that some sense of priorities usually has to be established when one goal -- for example, continued library service to everyone -- finds itself in conflict with another -- particular service to a special interest group.

The question is, then, not whether life can be lived without compromises, but rather whether certain compromises are an unacceptable trade-off. The question has been put in its most challenging form in the familiar words: "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" But in politics, and in the institutions and agencies which are caught up to any degree in political action (as public libraries are), the question may be couched in less cosmic terms, and still be urgent. Is there a point beyond which compromise, accepted in order to protect a desirable objective, actually destroys the objective itself? In our field, the library exists to make information available (using the term "information" in its broadest, most comprehensive and most humanistic sense). If the only way the library can continue to exist is to withhold and inhibit information, is it then still a library? We are, as you see, in the realm of philosophy.

As we translate these broad ethical principles into actual instances, it will probably be much easier for us to retain our high moral tone and our enblemished ethical position if we take our examples from somebody else's field of responsibility rather than our own. If a newspaper is dedicated to informing the public, should it suppress an important item of ecological news because it might offend an advertiser? I should think we might question the professionalism of an editor who made such a decision. If a television network is operated in the public interest, convenience, and necessity, should it cancel a carefully researched documentary on air pollution because it might offend a sponsor? Our library press is filled with denunciations of such practices. If the press of a state university, committed to the publication of research findings which advance knowledge, receives a manuscript on the environment which carries data challenging to the viewpoint of a wealthy donor, should it refuse publication rather than endanger future philanthropy? Not, I suppose, if it wishes to continue to call itself a university press. And if a library, devoted to the enlightenment of the public, finds a notable book which questions practices typical of the town's major industry, should the library refuse to purchase for fear of retaliation on the next bond issue? Ah, well -- that's a bit different....

It may, indeed, be different if we reject two premises which my loaded question assumed about public library service. One of these is that we serve the interests of all the people. I would guess that if I had put it to you: "Should the American, publicly-supported, free public library take as its guiding principle: to keep the rich happy and to hell with the middle-middles and the poor?" there would be no

question about where you stand. But the issue might not be quite so clear if I had left out the reference to "the rich," and had said merely "those who hold the purse strings." In a democracy that could be a large number of people in all economic classes, and somehow the principle -- which is the same in both instances -- is not so clear when the pressure comes, not from a single wealthy Patron (with a capital "P"), but from a group of less wealthy patrons -- in lower case.

The other premise is that the public library has as a major responsibility, the provision of enlightenment on public issues. Perhaps you do reject that. Libraries do, after all, serve several other functions: the provision of entertainment; the preservation of the tradition; the promotion of esthetic appreciation; the dissemination of information on many subjects of general interest -- and these are not unimportant goals. It is conceivable that you might well feel that we should not jeopardize the opportunity for a large number of our users to continue to have access to general materials which inform, delight and educate, simply in order to add other materials, some of which might disturb, challenge, and infuriate.

But to disturb, challenge and infuriate is one of the ways that we educate, inform, and enlighten; indeed, there are those who would say that that is the only way that one can educate. Simply to tell people what they already know or wish to believe is to reinforce their knowledge but not to advance it. Reinforcement, of course, is also a legitimate social function to foster; it is the main accomplishment of most of the mass media most of the time. But if we see our role as something more than that, then to settle for reinforcement isn't good

enough.

You see where we are: we are back at the "idea of what a library is or should be," and you see what I am suggesting: that the "idea of the library" rests upon its credibility as a source of information, education and enlightenment, and if we weaken that credibility on some issues, we weaken it on all. So we are not really protecting those other functions after all, if we begin to nibble away at the sources of our particular strength and authority, for it is on these that the validity of those functions rests.

But if we take such a stand, isn't it possible that we will have confrontations, difficulties, hassles and tensions? May we not have to justify our position to people predetermined not to understand us? May we not alienate some people whose help it would be desirable to have? The answer is: Yes. I never promised you a rose garden.

But remember that every decision of any value is likely to alienate somebody. If you leave out materials that are offensive to some, you deny them to others who want them. If you assuage the manager of the industrial plant, you will alienate the anti-pollution contingent. We make decisions like that every time we select or reject materials for our shelves -- and after all, the decision not to make a decision is also a decision.

Well, that's the general principle. Let me now confess to you that in my mind, anti-pollution and preservation of the environment do not seem to be that controversial an issue. Nobody, not even the polluters, would claim that it's a good idea to kill the lake, or poison the atmosphere, or deafen the next generation. Anti-pollution has now joined motherhood and apple pie as a safe political issue.

Indeed, it may now be a safer issue than either of these. Motherhood is being attacked by many today — including mothers. And there's nothing politically safe about inorganic apple pie. A report of several recent polls of public opinion, published in the Spring 1972 issue of the Public Opinion Quarterly shows that well over half of the respondents consider pollution a matter of serious concern; expect that pollution will be an important issue in the next political campaign; would like to see the government spend more on programs related to natural resources; and — most impressive of all -- might even be willing to see a very small increase in their own taxes to support programs for combatting air and water pollution. Every major political candidate has an ecological plank in his platform. And the federal government, and most state governments, have already moved toward an attack on the acknowledged problem of protecting the environment. Under the circumstances, for a library to suggest that protection of the environment is an important public issue hardly strikes me as an act of either prescience or daring.

The question certainly is not any longer, "Shall we do anything about it?" That is an accepted national objective. But the question, "What can effectively be done?" is still debatable, for it is a question of means, not ends. When we come to that kind of question, we have to face the responsibility of making sure that our facts are straight, our presentations reasoned, and that all sides have an equal opportunity to make their positions known.

The challenge, then, is not going to come on the library's right to provide information on the issue as such, but rather on the accuracy, fairness, and reliability of the material it disseminates. The pressure

is going to come if it appears that the library has omitted several legitimate facets of the problem in order to present a single side (even if in the end that side should prove to be the right one). For an issue like that of protecting the environment is clear-cut only in its broadest terms; it is much less clear in some of its specifics. Above all, it is not a matter of individual choices and decisions, but rather that of group decision. And in group decisions, the problem is not only that people want different things; it is also that even when they want the same things, they disagree honestly and legitimately about how to get them. More than that, in arriving at social choices we find that a change in one value of an interdependent system levies a cost on some other¹ -- a cost which is not necessarily a crass financial one.

It is a fact that it would be desirable to keep a nice redwood forest; but it may also be a fact that the price is to destroy a local community's going industry and the source of livelihood for the majority of its citizens. In dealing with such questions as the location of jetports, the routing of new highways, the conversion to electricity from coal, we are involved in public decision making, not matters solely of individual concern -- and there are social priorities to be taken into account.

It is because the protection of the environment is a social issue, and because social issues do have ramifications, that I believe the library's role must be to take into account the full range of interests

¹Daniel Bell in Martin Greenberger, ed., Computer, Communications and Public Interest. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971, p. 281.

and considerations involved, in order to assist in the achievement of a sound judgment rather than an emotional or simplistic one. Particularly in the realm of ecological problems, the attempts to meet the issue have so frequently jumped in with solutions that create new problems -- and sometimes even worse ones -- that we ought to be conditioned to caution by now.

Here's an example: the run-off from cheap nitrates has polluted many rivers, and so we campaign against their use. But it was the discovery and use of nitrates that boosted our agricultural productivity to such an extent in the past couple of decades that we have been able to help feed many starving areas of the world, such as India. Are you ready to say that a pretty stream is more important than a starving child?

Here's another: To combat air pollution, New York City barred the use of incinerators in large apartment buildings. As a result, the amount of garbage to be collected increased about forty percent, and the winter snows immobilized the increased fleet of garbage trucks. Would you rather be choked by garbage than by smoke?

And yet another, closer to home: because of the heavy pollution of the air, we mounted a large and successful campaign to reduce the burning of soft coal in the Chicago area. The resultant move to electric heating and power put such a drain on available facilities that it became necessary to build new nuclear sources -- which dump hot water into the lake. Are you prepared to say that water pollution is an acceptable price to pay for slightly cleaner air? Particularly when there seems to be some question whether the removal of some pollutants in the air does not lead to an imbalance of another, maybe

more dangerous, kind?

These illustrations do not detract from the sincerity of our motives nor the social justification for our search for solutions. But they do suggest that our knowledge of all the factors is not sufficient, as yet, to qualify us to promise panaceas. In every one of those instances -- and one can think of many, many more -- there could have been no question about the adverse effects and the social costs of misused technology. But I suggest that the library's best contribution would have been to supply all the information it possibly could on all aspects of the proposed solutions, pro and con, rather than to jump in as an advocate of a proposal, however desirable it must have seemed at the time. To assist in the search for the truth, rather than to hand it out prepackaged and to be taken on faith, is the library's traditional role, and to me, it is more important now than ever. That, in my view, is the end for which a public library mounts a program of public enlightenment.

I am aware that such a position puts me into a camp that is somewhat unpopular with many serious and thinking people in the library field. There are those who feel strongly that the librarian cannot remain outside of key social issues, but must become an active and announced advocate on the side that he or she knows is right. They see the librarian's dedication to "objectivity" (which they would put in quotation marks) as a cop out; an excuse for an irresponsible, deadpan dissemination of false information, biases, and outright lies.

But I am not suggesting that objectivity requires the inclusion of anything written on all subjects, for part of that tradition to which I am committed stresses the librarian's role as selector,

evaluator, and screen. What I am concerned about is the danger in advocacy which, all too frequently, turns upside down the worst of the abuses: the slanted and edited presentation of the facts to serve a cause. The difference between full and impartial reporting of the facts, and the use of selected facts to fight for a personally desired political end, is a difference that I want the librarian and the library to preserve.

I am once again back at my old stand about the "idea of the library," and its unique social role. A major strength of the public library has been that it does stand as an impartial source of information; the place where the many sides of an issue may be explored; where as fair and complete a survey of the facts as is possible to assemble may be found. We know from our own experience, and communication research has confirmed, that the effectiveness of communication depends to a very great extent on the image of the source that is held by those who receive its messages. The call for library advocacy argues that our role would be strengthened if we were to "stand up and be counted" on controversial matters, but I very much doubt it. We would be applauded, and perhaps more heavily used, by those whose viewpoints we support, but we could no longer profess to be a reliable source of unbiased information -- neither on the issue at hand, nor on other issues thereafter.

It is always necessary at this point in this familiar debate to reaffirm the right and the obligation of the librarian as individual and as citizen to work for the causes in which he or she believes, but as librarians we have a responsibility beyond the current issue to the permanent objective. We, and these particular issues, will one day be

gone, but the intellectual contribution that the library makes to enlightenment on all public issues will -- and must -- continue. There is a difference between being responsive, and being responsible, which is all too easily overlooked in matters of urgent social moment.

What I am suggesting is not a rejection of advocacy, but support for an advocacy of a different sort. And if I may, I should like to enlist in my behalf, a much more eloquent spokesman than myself. Archibald MacLeish, who was librarian of Congress in a period of stress and challenge certainly as pressing as ours today, said so much better what I am trying to say, that I should like to borrow his formulations from a variety of contexts:¹

Here is MacLeish speaking: "The test of . . . fitness for service in a library in the United States today is not . . . lack of opinions or . . . failure to declare them. Every American librarian worthy of the name is today the champion of a cause. It is, to my mind, the noblest of all causes. . . the cause of the inquiring mind. . . . The question to us is not the question of public action but the question of public information. If the basic decisions are to continue to be made by the people. . . how are the people to be informed? How are they to be provided not only with knowledge of the new facts creating the specific issue to be decided, but also with knowledge of the relevant parts of the historical record which constitute precedents for action? How are they to be provided with defenses against. . . special pleading. . .? How are they to be provided with. . . the

¹The quotations from Archibald MacLeish in the following paragraphs are selected from Champion of a Cause: Essays and Addresses on Librarianship by Archibald MacLeish. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1971), passim.

materials they must have and have quickly and in the most useful form if they are to decide well and decide wisely the issues upon which all the future hangs? These are the questions which present themselves to us when we consider our lives and our work. . . . For it is we who are the keepers -- the proud keepers -- of. . . these precedents for decision."

MacLeish was speaking in a time when the threat to the librarian's calling was far more immediate than it is today; the time of the burning of the books and the apparently irreversible forward sweep of fascism and thought control across Europe. His concern was understandably about the suppression of ideas; the censorship of viewpoints; the engineering of consent. He was not calling for objectivity in the usual sense, for it was his belief that one cannot be objective about the cause -- the cause of the tradition of free inquiry. "Whenever we decide that a book which somebody wants suppressed shall not be suppressed. . . we have ceased to be 'objective'. We will have taken sides." But never will we have taken sides with those who would suppress certain books or ideas or viewpoints in order to leave available only the views with which we are in agreement. "The honor of the modern American librarian," said MacLeish, "is the completeness as well as the worth of his collection." A librarian would not suppress a relevant and substantial book because it was offensive to himself personally -- or to his employer -- or to those who attempt to influence his employer -- because the modern librarian is a trustee of the printed record of civilization, and any exclusion from the collection of a relevant book or class of books is a falsification of the record and a breach of trust. What we have to preserve above all -- or all

the other causes are lost anyway -- is, he felt, the protection of access to books of all kinds and of all opinions so that the people, men and women, young and old, can come to their own conclusions, can decide for themselves which is right and which is wrong; "can determine for themselves which aspect of life is truth and which aspect of life is misconception." That is the cause we champion, that is the cause in which we become active agents; that is the one cause on which librarians, as librarians, cannot remain neutral and objective.

Because I agree so completely with Daniel Bell's observation that "in life there are many truths and they sometimes conflict with each other" and because social history demonstrates over and over again that "so many of our difficulties in the past have come from the partisans of absolute truths. . . who brooked no rivals to their conceptions,"¹ I align myself with the MacLeish view of the librarian as advocate. My conviction is that the librarian's responsibility, not only on the subject of the environment but on all issues, is "to widen the sphere of choice, . . . to make people aware of the costs and consequences of whatever choice is made"². . . and to foster the conscious debate about choices through the provision of the necessary information and knowledge which are essential to rational choice. I echo your battle cry, but I broaden it to encompass a far more difficult, challenging and continuing task when I suggest that the librarian's responsibility in the matter of environmental information is -- in every sense of the phrase -- to clear the air.

¹Daniel Bell, op. cit., pp. 280-81.

²Ibid., p. 284.

APPENDIX B

FEDERAL AGENCIES WITH ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The following is a list of some major federal and related agencies which deal with environmental matters. They are all cited in the United States Government Organization Manual as having some kind of informational or educational responsibilities through an office of public affairs or public information. This makes all of them potential sources of materials. The listings are arranged under the major government departments and as independent boards, commissions, and agencies. In many cases, regional offices of these agencies have been established. Their locations are noted in the Manual.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. Additional sources may be obtained by noting the agency origination of documents. It will be necessary to consult the latest edition of the Manual to keep up with the rapidly evolving pattern of administrative changes necessitated by the government's response to the environmental challenge.

Executive Branch

Executive Departments

Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Research Service
Washington, D.C. 20250

Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service
Washington, D.C. 20250

Forest Service
Washington, D.C. 20250

Soil Conservation Service
Washington, D.C. 20250

Department of Commerce

Environmental Data Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Rockville, Maryland 20852

National Industrial Pollution Control Council
Washington, D.C. 20230

National Ocean Survey
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Department of Defense

Department of the Army
Office, Chief of Engineers
Washington, D.C. 20314

Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

Bureau of Community Environmental Management
Health Services and Mental Health Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Office of Environmental Education
Office of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
Research Triangle Park,
North Carolina 22709

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Office of Community and Environmental Standards
Washington, D.C. 20410

Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management
Washington, D.C. 20240

Bureau of Mines
Washington, D.C. 20240

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
Washington, D.C. 20240

Bureau of Reclamation
Engineering and Research Center, Building 67
Denver, Colorado 80225

Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife
Washington, D.C. 20240

Geological Survey
Washington, D.C. 20242

National Environmental Education Development Program
National Park Service
Washington, D.C. 20242

Division of Information
National Park Service
Washington, D.C. 20242

Department of Justice

Land and Natural Resources Division
Washington, D.C. 20530

Department of Labor

Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Washington, D.C. 20210

Department of Transportation

Office of Environment and Urban Systems
Washington, D.C. 20590

Office of Environmental Policy
Federal Highway Administration
Washington, D.C. 20590

Executive Office of the President

Council on Environmental Quality
722 Jackson Place NW
Washington, D.C. 20006

Independent Boards, Commissions, and Agencies

Atomic Energy Commission
Division of Environmental Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20545

Citizens' Advisory Committee on Environmental Quality
1700 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20006

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Washington, D.C. 20250

Forest Service
Washington, D.C. 20250

Soil Conservation Service
Washington, D.C. 20250